

HIS 510-01: Historiography

Fall 2023

Seminar, 3 credit hours

Time: Mondays 5:30-8:20pm

Location: MHRA 2208

Instructor Information:

Dr. Teresa Walch

Email: tmwalch@uncg.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

What is history? How has the profession changed over the past century? How are the stories we tell shaped by the questions we ask, the sources we select, and the wider agendas we set? Contrary to a popular conception that history is merely a narration of an objective past “as it really was,” the study of history is a complex endeavor that involves interpretation. Historiography—the study of *history* as an academic discipline—reveals that the profession’s agendas and approaches have shifted dramatically over time.

In this course, we will explore major theoretical and methodological approaches to history in the modern era. We will begin with a broad overview of the historical profession and then continue by analyzing a particular concept or historiographical approach each week. We will also consider how these approaches informed, built upon, or transformed one another. The readings consist of classical texts by major thinkers as well as monographs and articles that apply their theoretical ideas. One goal of the seminar is to assess the ongoing relevance of these approaches for historians in the present and future (that includes you!).

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. distinguish between different methodological and theoretical approaches to history.
2. assess how topic and primary source selections shape the narratives crafted by historians.
3. explain how, why, and when approaches to history have evolved over the past century.
4. develop and strengthen their scholarly profiles by identifying which journals, networks, and listservs are relevant for their own fields.
5. evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual approaches to history and critique the practical application of them in journal articles and monographs.
6. synthesize complex arguments and draw connections between texts and bodies of thought via oral presentations and written assignments.

Required Books

Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019).

Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Medford: Polity Press, 2018).

Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). (available as an [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008). (available as an [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). (available as an [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. (20th anniversary edition, 2015). (available as a [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). (available as a [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

** You may purchase all required books via the [UNCG bookstore](#), online, or elsewhere. Copies of all required books are available via Jackson Library, either as an e-book (indicated above) or on reserve as a hard copy. All other required readings will be made available on Canvas, linked or as an e-reserve. Prior to accessing the e-reserves, you will need to activate your UNCG Box accounts by visiting [box.uncg.edu](#) and logging in with your UNCG username and password.

Assignments & Grading

Participation in Class Discussions (SLOs 1, 2, 3 & 5) – This is a small, reading intensive seminar. Attendance and active participation are crucial. As a graduate student, you are expected to regularly attend every class. As your instructor, I have endeavored to amass an interesting, and coherent, set of readings. But in this course, I will chiefly be your guide through the historical debates and topics at-hand. Via written assignments and oral presentations, you will have the chance to engage with pressing debates within the historical discipline and to hone your own scholarly voice.

Written Responses (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6) – You will write a total of 6 written responses (800 words each) throughout the semester. You select the weeks for which you'd like to write the responses (between Weeks 3-16). These responses should reflect your deep engagement with the weekly readings. Your response should not summarize the texts but rather should grapple with the material and demonstrate critical analysis on your part. You might opt to identify common threads or contradictions between the various readings, for example. You might evaluate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological approaches at-hand and critique their practical applications in the week's readings. Please see the separate handout on "Tips for Written Responses" for more detailed guidelines.

You should conclude your response by posing two open-ended discussion questions that emerge from the readings and that reflect a deep engagement with the issues raised in the readings. You will upload these responses on Canvas as Word documents each week by Sunday @ 11:59pm.

Oral Presentation (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6) – You will present the weekly readings on 2 separate occasions this semester (individually and/or with a classmate). On your assigned presentation day, you will begin our discussion of the weekly readings with an approx. 15-minute presentation in which you:

- summarize the authors' main questions & arguments,
- identify their main historiographical and/or methodological interventions,

- draw connections between the assigned readings and the weekly topic
- highlight important “takeaways” from the readings (for example: how does the approach, as discussed in the assigned readings, compare to or contrast with approaches we’ve discussed previously in class)
- provide any critiques of your own of the readings,
- pose 2-3 questions to the class for discussion.

In addition, for the days we read monographs, you will present a short biography of the author. You will also collect reviews of the book and summarize the main points of praise and critique that other scholars have given for the book.

** You will summarize all these points in a printout (max. 1 page) to share with your classmates (10 copies) on the day you present so that they can follow along during your presentation. (If you do not have access to a printer, please send me your handout by 12:00pm on Monday so that I can print it out for the class). I encourage you all to keep these one-page handouts for future reference. They will be a great help during your graduate studies and in preparation for your qualifying exams.

Scholarly Profile Assignment (SLO 4) – For this assignment, you have the opportunity to build and expand your own scholarly profile. HIS 510 covers a broad swath of territory relevant for all historians. But the necessary breadth means that we need to sacrifice depth in some areas that might be of particular interest to you as historians. Thus, this assignment allows you to start pursuing some of those avenues that interest you most. For this assignment, you will be asked to identify several things:

1. scholarly journals relevant to your field of interest,
2. networks relevant to your field (including scholarly associations, societies, listservs, etc.),
3. grants and fellowships available to people in your field of interest,
4. major historians working in your field,
5. important archives for historians working in your field,
6. a major debate that is currently raging (or has recently reshaped) your field,
7. professional opportunities (internships, further training, professions, etc.) available to people with training in your field.

You will compile this information in a PowerPoint, upload it to Canvas, and briefly present your findings to the class in Week 6, 8, or 10 (we will assign dates in Week 1).

Final Historiographic Essay (SLOs 3, 5 & 6) – For the final assignment, you will write a historiographic essay that builds upon one of the weekly themes/methodological approaches that interests you most. It may (but does not need to) pertain to the major debate in your field that you identify in the “Scholarly Profile Assignment.” You will select 4-5 books and write a review essay (12-15 pages) that examines and critiques the current trends in your selected thematic/methodological approach. You may discuss the selection of these books with me, but I also encourage you to consult with your advisors in your field. You will submit the final essay as a Word document on Canvas.

Your final grade will be assessed as such*:

- 30% – Participation in Class Discussions
- 25% – Written Responses
- 15% – Oral Presentations (5% for 1st presentation; 10% for 2nd presentation)
- 5% – Scholarly Profile Assignment
- 25% – Final Historiographic Essay (5% for initial book list; 20% for final assignment)

Final Grade Scale: **A:** ≥ 93.0; **A-:** 90.0-92.9; **B+:** 87.0-89.9; **B:** 83.0-86.9; **B-:** 80.0-82.9; **C+:** 77.0-79.9; **C:** 73.0-76.9; **C-:** 70.0-72.9; **D:** 60.0-69.9; **F:** <60.0

Assignment Submission and Format

You will submit all assignments in this course electronically on Canvas, either as a Word document or PowerPoint (please see above for details). Only for your oral presentation are you required to bring paper printouts to class. No other assignments will be accepted by paper or by email.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance and participation in this graduate seminar is mandatory. Please arrive to class on time each week. Consistent tardiness will lower your grade. If there is an emergency or if there are other extenuating circumstances that will cause you to miss a class, you should notify me *ahead of time*.

Communication

I will be in contact with you regularly throughout the semester. I will primarily update you via emails sent to your UNCG email address, so please regularly check your email accounts. At any time throughout the semester, you may send me an email with questions or request to schedule an appointment. I will respond to emails sent to me Monday-Thursday within 24-48 hours. I will respond to emails received Friday-Sunday the following Monday. In general, if you have urgent questions, I encourage you to post your questions to the "General Discussion Board" on Canvas to see if one of your classmates can answer your question.

Technical Support

I am unable to help you resolve any questions regarding technology. Students with technical issues with the course and email should contact 6-TECH for support either by email or phone or chat ([6TECH Help](#)).

Health and Wellness Statement

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](tel:336-334-5874), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu.

Academic Integrity

All the work you submit in this course must be your own. You are expected to properly cite and acknowledge any material that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize. Each student is required to sign UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. If you have any questions, I encourage you to visit UNCG's webpages on [plagiarism](#) and [academic integrity](#).

Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, oars.uncg.edu.

Religious Holidays

It is expected that instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts due to religious obligations. Please make arrangements with me in advance of any such scenario. For more information on UNCG's Religious Obligations policy, visit: [UNCG's Religious Obligations Policy](#).

Note on Syllabus Materials & Updates

If the need arises, there may be adjustments to the syllabus and calendar. In such cases, I will notify you in class or via email with an updated syllabus and calendar within a reasonable timeframe to allow you to adjust as needed.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – NO CLASS (UNCG Classes only begin on Begin on August 15)

Week 2 – Introduction & Overview (August 21)

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Week 3 – From Classic Approaches to “Objectivity” (August 28)

Selections from Jeremy Popkin, *From Herodotus to H-Net: The Story of Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 68-96; 115-117. (e-reserve)

Leopold von Ranke, “On the Character of Historical Science,” in *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8-16. (e-reserve)

“Truth and Objectivity,” in Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, 241-270 (New York: Norton, 1994). (e-reserve)

Prefaces & Chapter 1 in Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Steve Cox, 1-50 (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). (e-reserve)

Week 4 – NO CLASS: Labor Day (September 4)

Week 5 – Marxism (September 11)

Karl Marx, "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 3-6. (e-reserve)

Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," Part 1, in *ibid.*, 146-200. (e-reserve)

E. P. Thompson, "[Preface](#)" to *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Open Road Media, 2016), 10-14.

E. P. Thompson, "[Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism](#)," *Past & Present* 38 (1967): 56-97.

Eric J. Hobsbawm, "[Marx and History](#)," *New Left Review* 143 (1984): 39-50.

Week 6 – Social History: History "From Below" (September 18)

Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Walter Johnson, "[On Agency](#)," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113-124.

Matthew B. Karush and Peter N. Stearns, "[Five Decades of Social History: An Interview with Peter Stearns](#)," *Journal of Social History* 51, no. 3 (2018): 488-499.

Week 7 – NO CLASS: Religious Holiday (September 25)

Week 8 – Cultural History (October 2)

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in *idem.*, [The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays](#) (New York, 1973), 3-30.

Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, "Introduction," in [Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture](#) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1-32.

Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt. The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin," in *idem.*, [The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History](#) (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 75-104.

William H. Sewell, Jr., "[Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille](#)," *Theory and Society* 25, no. 6 (1996): 841-888.

Week 9 – NO CLASS: UNCG Fall Break (October 9)

Week 10 – Microhistory (October 16)

Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," in Peter Burke, *New Perspectives in Historical Writing*, 2nd ed. (Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2001), 93-113

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Robert Finlay, "The Refashioning of Martin Guerre," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), 553-571.

Natalie Zemon Davis, "On the Lame," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), 572-603.

Week 11 – Postmodernism & Postcolonialism (October 23)

David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989), 3-9, 39-65. (e-reserve)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "[Introduction](#)" and "[Chapter 1: Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History](#)," in *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 3-23, 27-46.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. (20th anniversary edition, 2015)

Week 12 – Gender & Sexuality (October 30)

Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Joan Scott, "[Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis](#)," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-75.

Joanne Meyerowitz, "[A History of 'Gender,'](#)" *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1346-1356.

Regina Kunzel, "[The Power of Queer History](#)," *American Historical Review* 123, no. 5 (2018): 1560–1582. [Review Essay]

Week 13 – Material & Visual Culture (November 6)

Leora Auslander, "[Beyond Words](#)," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 4 (2005): 1014-1045.

Brandon Schechter, "[Embodied Violence: A Red Army Soldier's Journey as Told by Objects](#)," in *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*, ed. Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 139-163.

Tina M. Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 1-70.

Annelie Ramsbrock, "[The 'Face of War' in Weimar Visual Culture](#)," in *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth-Century German History*, ed. Jennifer Evans, Paul Betts, and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), 57-78.

Week 14 – World, Global, and Transnational Histories (November 13)

Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008).

Bruce Mazlish, "[Comparing Global History to World History](#)," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28, no. 3 (1998): 385-95.

Akira Iriye, "[Transnational History](#)," *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (2004): 211-222. [Review Essay]

Week 15 – Environmental History (November 20)

Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019).

Paul S. Sutter, "[The World with Us: The State of American Environmental History](#)," *The Journal of American History* 100, no. 1 (2013): 94-119.

Lisa M. Brady, "Has Environmental History Lost Its Way?" *Process: A Blog for American History*, Organization of American Historians, December 15, 2015, <http://www.processhistory.org/has-environmental-history-lost-its-way/> .

Week 16 – Historians, Memory, and The Public (November 27)

Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Medford: Polity Press, 2018).

Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 43-59. (e-reserve)

William Cronon, "[Storytelling](#)," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 1-19.

Matthew Gabriele, "[Why Historians Are Like Tax Collectors](#)," *Forbes*, March 24, 2019.